



Farm Environmental Stewardship Award

2014 FINALIST

A seventh generation farm, Out to Pasture Farm has seen a lot of changes over the years, but the Veinotte family's dedication to sustainability and the environment has been continuous. Kevin Veinotte and his family farm 110 acres of pasture and hay land and 21 acres of Christmas trees. The farm has a herd of 75 beef cattle, 50 sheep and free range chickens. A truly diverse operation, Out to Pasture Farm also has 350 acres of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified woodland and 17 acres of ponds, wetlands and areas dedicated for wildlife habitat.



Although not certified, the farm follows organic practices in the management of their Christmas trees and livestock. Kevin uses beneficial insects to control pests within the Christmas trees and the barn yard. Rotational grazing, frost seeding and applying the farm's manure based on soil fertility tests and a nutrient management plan helps ensure productive pastures and forage fields.



The family has worked hard to protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat on the farm. Livestock are fenced from the two streams that flow through the property, except for one well-maintained access point in a remote pasture. Large buffers and riparian zones are left along the streams and the farm works closely with the Adopt-a-Stream Project to continuously improve stream bank health and fish habitat. The farm developed an

Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation (ABC) Plan with the Department of Natural Resources and, based on recommendations from that plan, worked with Ducks Unlimited to construct a large wetland in the middle of the farm. The wetland not only provides significant habitat for numerous types of wildlife, it also helps treat runoff from farm fields. Nest boxes have been

placed around the wetland to encourage nesting ducks and bird boxes are located along the edges of the fields and through the woodlot and Christmas trees. When hay is harvested, a raised cutter bar helps to avoid harming nesting birds.

The farm's woodlot is a significant component of the farm. Horses are used when selective cutting takes place, which reduces the amount of damage to the forest floor. The farm is dedicated to maintaining an un-even age stand, employing many practices to ensure adequate regeneration. Because of their woodland management practices, Kevin won Provincial Woodlot Owner of the Year in 2007.



The Veinotte family's dedication to farm stewardship has made them one of three finalists for this year's Farm Environmental Stewardship Award. The award is part of the Environmental Farm Plan Program created through a partnership of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Nova Scotia Environmental Farm Plan Team and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture.

The award recognizes producers who make land, water and habitat stewardship a significant part of their farm operations. To be eligible for the award, farmers must have an environmental farm plan. The voluntary plan helps them identify, assess, and reduce environmental risk on their farms. Since the program's inception in 1999, more than 1,750 farmers have developed Environmental Farm Plans for their operations.

The Environmental Farm Plan Program is supported under *Growing Forward 2*, a five-year agricultural agreement between the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia.
